Project for soil testing in Tripura

2318. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to sanction the project amounting to Rs. 116.70 lacs for strengthening/ modernisation of soil testing in Tripura;

(b) if so, by when it will be sanctioned; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) The proposal amounting to Rs. 116.70 lakhs for strengthening/modernisation of soil, testing in Tripura was received in this Ministry. The proposal was not found as per the norms of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Balanced and Integrated use of Fertilizers'. The State Government of Tripura has, therefore, been requested to send a fresh proposal as per norms of the scheme which is still awaited. Besides, the State already has unspent funds amounting to Rs. 16.99 lakhs in the beginning of the curnt financial year, out of the funds released earlier under the Scheme. The utilisation of the above funds has been requested.

Decline in Cultivable Area in Himachal Pradesh

2319. SHRI ANIL SHARMA Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the total area under cultivation is coming down in Himachal Pradesh resulting a sharp decline in agricultural production in the backward areas and hilly areas of the State; and

(b) what steps Government have taken or proposed to take to solve this problem in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The production of important crops such as foodgrains, oilseeds and sugarcane in the state of Himachal Pradesh during last four years has not declined. However, areas under these crops have marginally declined.

(b) The Farmers are being encouraged to bring more area for cultivation under foodgrains, through the incentives provided under various programmes such as Integrated Crop Development Programme for wheat, Oilseeds Production Programme and National Pulses Development Project in the State.